

HELPS FOR THE MOTHER OF A BLIND CHILD

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Helps for the Mother of a Blind Child

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The Blind Child

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Suggestions for the Blind and their Friends

A SYMPOSIUM

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for his toys, he will eventually make some feeble effort to reach them. Thus, a great deal of insistence and encouragement is necessary to create in the mind of the child a desire to move about; for, it is only when the blind child begins to walk that he learns that his world stretches beyond the reach of his chubby arm.

This child must find out for himself the position of the furniture to which the sighted baby has unconsciously become accustomed. Then, too, he is denied the assurance of the nearby chair, for he is not conscious of its presence until he has reached it. Lead the child about by the hands; let him follow the edge of a couch or bed, or clear a space along the wall and persuade him to come to you by steadying his timid steps by holding fast to some substantial object. Speak to him constantly, that he may be assured of your nearness. As the child gains confidence, introduce him gradually to new parts of the room, but do not place him in too many strange situations until he moves about with comparative ease.

Be careful of the position of limbs and body: insist upon the head being held up—holding the hand under the chin, if necessary at first.

When walking has been successfully mastered, every effort should be exerted to secure confidence. The blind child should be encouraged to romp with brothers or sisters, or with father or mother, for he will be slow to move about of his own accord. Give him space and tempt him to run, especially out-of-doors. He will soon learn his way about a yard, if allowed freedom and he may romp with safety about a grassy lawn. Encourage the child's development to be as natural as possible by teaching the children with whom he comes in contact to include him in their play. Brothers and sisters may be taught unselfishness by being required to give some thought to this child. It is not excusable to allow a child without sight to sit quietly alone indoors, simply because he is perfectly content to do so; he must be roused to activity, for in it lies his salvation. If permitted to sit undisturbed, he will acquire disagreeable habits such as rocking the body, rolling the head, and become stooped and fearful in moving about. To be sure, he will get falls and bumps as he runs about, but, what child does not? You do not deny sighted children their play because of such slight injuries. The

bruises will be far more easily remedied than the harmful results of inactivity.

The blind child requires more careful instruction in handling knife, fork, and spoon than his brothers and sisters because of his inability to imitate his elders. These lessons can be most easily and effectually taught in the very beginning, therefore, their teaching should be done by the mother by placing the utensil in the proper position in the child's hand and insisting upon its being held as placed. This endeavor will require the exercise of patience and perseverance, but the results will be well worth the effort, for they will be far more satisfying than much instruction after bad habits are already formed.

Personal independence can be taught at a very early age, and should begin with the child's being required to put his playthings in their proper place, and should be closely followed by teaching him to aid in dressing himself, at least as much as is expected of other children of the same age. It has long ago been demonstrated that the blind child can do all these things, but the mother must believe that he can do them before she can hope to accomplish results. It is mistaken kindness to do for the blind child that which he can do for himself. A few children who enter the institutions for the blind for instruction have suffered from neglect in early childhood, but a far greater number have been equally harmed by over-attention; a happy medium can be struck by the mother's establishing a sympathetic understanding between herself and her child. She must learn to control her own impulse to do more for this child than is actually required by this special need, in order that he may become as independent and useful as possible in later years.

The physical training of a blind child is most imperative, because most important; for his dependence upon the other senses taxes the nervous energy to a greater degree than with the normal child. Outdoor exercise is the most effective opposing force to overcome this disadvantage.

THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND CHILD.

The education of every blind child is its own peculiar problem, but its absolute necessity should be fully recognized by every thoughtful parent. To deny this child an education is to rob him of his birthright. In this

day of opportunity for all, there is no pardonable excuse for any child's growing up in ignorance; for, if you are unable to bear the expense of his instruction, there exists, in every state of the Union, some legislative provision for educating the blind children of the state, either in the form of a special school, or a fund set aside for their education in the institution of a nearby state.

In many large cities, such as Chicago, New York, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Racine, Detroit and Jersey City and Newark, N. J., blind children are today being educated in the public schools. Well-trained special teachers instruct the blind children in the use of apparatus adapted to their needs—teaching them to read and write some embossed system, to manipulate a special arithmetic slate, to follow raised maps, and to manage a typewriter. With these aids and the assistance of the special teacher, the blind boy or girl is enabled to recite side by side with his sighted brothers and sisters, and pursue his general education under the direction of the regular public school teachers. While this method is still an experiment, it is heartily endorsed by many leading educators of the blind, because it most nearly approaches the training of the normal child. By remaining at home, the blind boy or girl educated in the public school escapes being segregated with large numbers of children similarly handicapped, which, in many instances, is found to be a marked disadvantage.

The state institution for the blind is the oldest and best equipped medium of education. Here, the blind children of the state are brought together and, beginning with the kindergarten and proceeding through the primary, intermediate, grammar, and high-school departments, are instructed not only in all the branches included in the average public school curriculum, but equal attention is devoted to their physical, manual, business, musical, and social training. Every child is encouraged to move about freely and independently—to run, to jump, to swim, to skate, and to dance—in order that ease and grace of movement may be secured. Many of the most modern institutions have recently removed to suburban sites, where large areas of ground are set aside for athletics and outdoor play, and space and attention is also given to school gardening. Domestic science is being everywhere introduced to aid the girls in becoming helpful in the home. The unceasing devotion of

an earnest band of educators has made the modern school for the blind one of the best equipped educational institutions in the country—broad in its course of study, and effectual in its results. It is to these special schools that most of the successful blind owe an eternal debt of gratitude.

No parent of a blind child can fail to derive inspiration from a visit to one of the well-established schools for the blind which is to be found in his or a neighboring state. These institutions are representative of the most advanced methods and facilities for instructing the blind, and a visit to any one of them is heartily recommended.

The complete course of instruction in a school for the blind requires from eight to twelve years. It is not thought advisable to admit pupils before six years of age, except where the home environment is objectionable; but, if some thought is given to the child's training along the lines outlined above, he may remain at home until eight years old. This enables the student to graduate at about eighteen or twenty, at which age he is more able to take up some life work than earlier in the teens. The pupil graduating from such an institution should be well equipped for some field of usefulness, but a supplementary course at a college, normal school, university, or conservatory for the sighted places the blind man or woman more nearly on a plane with his competitors in the subsequent struggle for an independent living. With such preparation, surely the world must give place to him who earnestly desires to share the labors of his fellowmen.

Many fathers and mothers are reluctant to send their blind son or daughter away from home. If such parents are unable to supply any other means of education, such selfish objections should be bravely overcome in justice to the child, as the greatest kindness can be done by sending him to an institution. Officers of such schools heartily advocate pupils visiting their homes as often as possible, and parents are required to remove their child in vacations. Every effort is made to keep alive the child's interest in his home while at school.

If, however, parents, who possess the necessary means, prefer to have their child remain at home, a special teacher may be given charge of his education. Such an instructor should be familiar with the methods employed in the most up-to-date schools for the blind. Super-

intendents of nearby institutions are usually able to recommend competent tutors, or will be glad to allow an experienced teacher to observe the work done in the institution in order to acquire the special training necessary to begin the child's instruction. The family governess may, by spending a few days at a modern school for the blind, learn the use of the special appliances adapted to the needs of her prospective pupil. She should master some system of raised print, and procure a slate for writing a punctographic type. All the necessary apparatus may be obtained at an institution for beginning a child's instruction at home.

When the art of reading and writing is perfectly mastered, the blind child may join his brothers and sisters in the family school-room, or enter a private school for sighted children—his tutor giving him the assistance required at home, and reading aloud to him the lessons which are not available in raised print. Many excellent text books in embossed type may now be bought or borrowed from the leading institutions of the country. The boy or girl who is educated at home should study music and literature—especially poetry—to develop the æsthetic sense. Manual training should not be neglected, the hand can only be made sensitive through constant use. Much attention should be given to physical culture, including dancing, to give freedom and poise in walking. It should be the duty of the private teacher to instruct the child without sight in those dainty social traits which he may not learn by imitation, but which are the indications of good breeding. The primary object of a blind child's education should be to make him as independent and inconspicuous as possible; that he should be keen, alert, responsive, and unrestrained is of greater consequence than much learning or exceptional talent. To compete with the sighted world, the man or woman without sight must command its attention, its confidence, and its respect, and should not arouse its sympathy.

FINDING A FIELD OF USEFULNESS.

It is when the blind student has completed his education that the mother can be his greatest help or hinderance to success. The one great lesson he will have learned is that there is a place for him in the world's work. Like all other graduates, he will emerge from the

state institution, the high school, normal school, college, university, or conservatory with high hopes and lofty aspirations. He will have chosen a field in which he desires to use his peculiar talents; and, though he has been constantly warned of the pit-falls that will beset his path, he is eager to begin his struggle for a place in the ranks of the useful. He is ambitious to prove his ability, to become financially independent, and to achieve some measure of success in his special field of service. Because he is young, all things seem to him possible.

It is in dealing with this spirit that the mother should be a tactful, sympathetic, and encouraging friend. She should believe in the ability of her child, for, is it not enough that he must meet the doubt of the world? There is no more cruel wrong than to crush the hopes and ambitions of youth; it is like blighting the bloom of a lovely flower before it has had time to mature.

Unlike his brothers and sisters, the blind graduate is obliged to create a demand for his labor. He must break down the barrier of incredulity and convince a sceptical public of his efficiency. However talented or well equipped, he is branded by his infirmity and reckoned incapable; even the opportunity of justifying his claim is often denied, until hope seems to die in the heart of the youthful aspirant, and worthy ambitions seem as idle dreams.

It is in these days of disappointment, that the mother can, by her unflinching belief in her son or daughter, keep alive the wavering courage, stimulate the failing confidence, and quicken the dying hope. Many are the obstacles to be overcome before the most persevering and determined blind achieve success, but the way may be greatly smoothed by the constant assurance of one sympathetic friend. He who will patiently endeavor must eventually succeed.

For the encouragement of the ambitious graduate, be it known that blind men and women have succeeded in the past, and never was there greater opportunity for their leading useful lives than in the present; and, to be useful is to be successful. The girl who becomes helpful in the home is as worthy of commendation as he who wins fame or acquires a fortune.

Many avenues of employment are now open to the blind. Though the popular opinion, that

all persons without sight are musical, is entirely unfounded, many men and women are today following the profession of music as teachers, organists, concert players, and composers. Many young men earn a livelihood as tuners of pianos, broom-makers, salesmen, conductors of private business, lawyers, tutors, osteopaths, and masseurs, while a few have branched out into some original line of work to which their peculiar talents have seemed especially adapted. Though the field of usefulness for the blind girl is, of necessity, bounded by narrower limits, a large number of young women are supporting themselves as telephone operators, stenographers, typewriters, teachers, organists, singers, and a few have become successful masseuses, while many others contribute largely toward their maintenance by doing fancy work at home, and, at the same time, lessen the household burdens by assisting in the discharge of domestic duties.

Do not these results justify the education of the blind? Even though there may be no need of the sightless member of a family earning a livelihood, no individual should be entirely without employment; and he whose hand has become skilled, whose mind has been enlightened, and whose soul has been awakened to a larger life, can not be idle. There are books to be read—which may be borrowed from many libraries, and which may be sent through the mail without postage—music to be practiced, letters to be written, mending to be done, fancy articles to be made, games to be played, such as checkers, dominoes, chess, and cards, and many social functions to be performed. Indeed, an intelligent blind person should be able to participate in almost all the daily occupations and enjoyments of the family. Reference to his affliction should be avoided by word and act, in order that self-consciousness may be destroyed; for, it is only so far as the man or woman without sight is treated as a fellow being that he or she may hope to acquire social poise.

While this article has traced the training

from infancy to maturity, the writer would not be understood to regard the continuance of the education of one losing the sight in childhood, adolescence, or adult life of less importance; indeed, to arrest an intellectual development is a graver wrong than to prevent its beginning. It is like stunting the growth of a promising plant by denying it proper nourishment.

The child or youth stricken blind during his attendance at public or private school, may, after he has sufficiently recovered from the physical shock of such a calamity, be placed in an institution for the blind, or may continue his education in any one of the methods before described. He will be greatly aided by his having seen during the early, impressionable age, for his memory will retain the visual image of objects which he must learn to know by touch; and he will possess a clearer conception of color, perspective, space, landscape, the sky, and relative form than can ever be conveyed to one who has never seen. The writer is deeply grateful for the vivid impressions of the visual world retained in her memory from early childhood, and her intimate knowledge of the blind is authority for the statement, that to have seen, even until eight or ten years of age, is a decided advantage throughout life.

While it is not customary to admit adults to the schools for the blind as regular students, many institutions provide temporary instruction to those who must become adjusted to a new condition, and many states and private organizations support Home Teachers whose duty it is to visit the adult blind in their homes, to render encouragement and instruction.

It is with the hope that these few words of comfort, encouragement, and counsel—suggested by the writer's experience as a blind child, a student, and a teacher of the blind—will eventually reach some mother who will profit by their message, that they are hereby set down. If one mother derives benefit from their perusal, they will not have been written in vain.

THE BLIND CHILD

By F. PARK LEWIS, M. D., F. A. C. S., Buffalo, N. Y.*

In the training of the blind child it might naturally be assumed that it would be with the teacher, rather than with the doctor, that the parents should be concerned. Unfortunately, the teacher does not come into the home, and is not brought in touch with the child until the first plastic and most valuable teaching years have past. The mother, in rare cases only, has had occasion to think of blindness as one of her problems. She finds herself, therefore, wholly unprepared for the great responsibility of directing the blind child's life which has suddenly devolved upon her. She does not know to whom to turn for help, so she very naturally seeks the aid of the physician, through whose assistance the child is brought into the world. Indeed, her first anxious question after the infant is born is: "Is my baby all right?"

The doctor who has given so much thought to the cure of disease, unless he has also been a student of social conditions, has not, at least until recently, concerned himself with child welfare. Within the last few years the study of the child has taken on a new interest and an added importance, but even within this field comparatively little has been said or written in relation to the management of the child whose possibilities are limited by some physical imperfection.

There is no one, therefore, who could more properly than the doctor advise with the parents of a blind child, or of one whose sight is so defective as to materially limit its possibilities of normal development through this affliction.

It is most important, therefore, that he should not only be able to recognize as soon as possible after its birth that the child is blind when this fact exists, but he should be able to suggest to the parents what course should be wisely pursued in regard to the care, education, and the training of the child dur-

ing those intervening years before he could be sent to one of the special schools which has been provided for him.

There are three things, therefore, which I think it might be well to emphasize. First, the necessity of recognizing the fact that the child is blind or has defective sight at the earliest age possible. Second, the manner in which the brain is developed through the training of the remaining special senses in the absence of sight. Third, the existence of that unusual condition, more highly developed in the blind than in those who see, and what is sometimes termed the sixth sense, or touch at a distance, but which consists in the recognition of the nearness of any material body having a sufficiently large surface area, by the perception of its approach through some sense other than that of conscious sight, hearing or personal contact.

If there is no reason to suspect that the been removed. The floor should be of one sight is imperfect, it is of great importance that the existence of marked refractive errors be discovered as soon as possible. In a very large number of markedly hyperopic eyes, or those in which the two eyes are focally different, and more especially when one eye converges, and there is a permanent squint, the brain area corresponding to the sight center of the inturned eye ceases to function, and following the law of nature, those functions which are not used cease to have the power of use. There has developed, therefore, an amblyopia which if uncorrected, becomes permanent, and a semi-blindness of the inturned eye, lasting through life, is the consequence. If, on the other hand, the proper refractive correction is made early enough, and the neurons corresponding to the sight center are made to function, the sight may be permanently preserved. It is a matter of greatest importance that in cases of squint the child be sent to an oculist as soon as the defect is discovered. I have, myself, used with great satisfaction strong correcting glasses upon a baby as young as five and one-half months old. Sometimes

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the presence of congenital myopia in very high degree gives the child a vague blind look which may lead to a mistaken diagnosis of idiocy. I have seen such an instance in the case of a five-year-old child whose eyes were myopic to the extent of ten diopters. To such a child all objects beyond five or six inches would have the appearance of being shrouded in mist, and the educative value of the visual pictures that are constantly being presented to the seeing child was thereby lost to him. The correction of the refraction gave the child such a degree of improved mental control as would hardly be thought possible.

In those cases in which gross physical changes are present, such as: staphyloma, or corneal opacities following ophthalmia neonatorum, and in which marked deformity of the eye ball results, it is, of course, easy to determine that the child is blind. This is equally true whenever the eye structures are obviously abnormal, such as in that rather rare condition called anophthalmia, or absence of the eye balls, in buphthalmos, or abnormal enlargement of the eye ball, in complete congenital cataract, and in other like noticeable defects. But there are many cases in which markedly imperfect sight or total blindness may be present with an apparently perfectly normal eye ball. These are the congenital atrophies of the optic nerve, or other deep eye ground changes which are discoverable only by the use of the ophthalmoscope.

TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE CHILD IS BLIND

As all young babies roll their eyes aimlessly during the first weeks of life it is difficult to determine, from observation merely, the absence of sight. This difficulty is increased, if, as more commonly happens, blindness is not complete, but objects are imperfectly seen. If, however, the pupils are widely dilated and unresponsive to light, and the eyes continue to move aimlessly from side to side without attempt to fix them upon an object, and more particularly in the presence of nystagmus, or spasmodic twitching of the eye balls, associated with an unwillingness or an inability on the part of the child to follow a light with his eyes when it is moved before him; all of these would be strong presumptive evidence after the sixth month that the vision was so imperfect as to warrant an ophthalmoscopic examination, by which a conclusion can be reached with much greater certainty.

However rapid may be the development of the child after it has reached school age, the period of greatest plasticity and quickest responsiveness is during the months of babyhood and the early years immediately following, and it is through the sense of sight that impressions, carried to the cortex, exercise the most profound influence upon the brain development. With the visual images every other sense impression is correlated. The object which the child sees, in order that he may realize its position in space, must be verified by the sense of touch. All of the sensory nuclei, therefore, which have been energized by the touch of the fingers if the object is held in the hand, of the feet as they touch the floor, of the arms and limbs as they move through the air, every one of these millions of neurons is brought into direct relationship with the corresponding number of other neurons in the sight center, so that every motion is sending a flood of nervous energy surging through the brain of the child. In that way he becomes conscious of his position in space, and he develops what is known as the stereognostic sense, or the consciousness of solid objects.

Cut off as the blind child is from the primary energizing influence of the visual impressions he is intellectually hampered and limited unless every possible supplemental effort is employed to replace, as far as may be, the advantages which, in comparison with the seeing child he is obliged to sacrifice.

The blind baby, not seeing the objects around him, is not, as is the seeing child, unconsciously or persistently being educated as to their form, their shape, their size, their importance, their meaning, in a word, their values. He lives in the dark, and every motion or every step which he attempts to make is an experiment and an adventure. The next step may precipitate him he knows not where. It may be from the top of a stairway. He can have no means of knowing. He is living in a world separate and distinct from that of his seeing associates. This fact should be early recognized and constantly borne in mind.

THE BLIND BABY

The blind baby must be talked to more than the child who sees. He must be allowed, carefully, to touch the objects about him, in order that in that way he may learn what he can about them. He must not be allowed to be

frightened by taking a misstep. He must not be startled by being touched suddenly and without warning. A nervous impression of that kind may leave its result for months, if not for years, upon the sensitive organism. When he is old enough to creep he should be allowed the freedom of the room, from which all objects against which he might hurt himself have level so that there may be no pitfalls for him. He must be allowed all manner of harmless things to handle, and he must always be spoken to as one comes near him that he may not be startled. Large motor and sensory areas may be trained by allowing him to feel, to touch, and to handle things varying in degrees of hardness, and smoothness, and of different shapes and forms. He will in that way be getting such approximate impressions as he can—limited as those are compared to the possibilities of the seeing child.

At a very early age, too, auditory areas may be actuated by singing simple melodies to the child, not in a vague and meaningless way, but carefully and in tune where it is possible for the mother to do so. The attention in that way can be directed and a recognition of different tones will begin at a much earlier age than is ordinarily supposed. Let it constantly be remembered that all of the moving pictures that pass before our eyes are blotted out for the blind baby. There is nothing but darkness before his unseeing eyes, and this monotony must be varied by greater attention to details that will interest him than would be necessary with a seeing child.

At a very early age any other existing corrigible physical defects should, if possible, be removed. It is bad enough for the child to be blind. He should not be still further handicapped by the presence of large tonsils, by adenoids, and the consequent otitis and deafness, or by any other defects of the body.

If the eyes are so deformed as to be not only useless, but offensive in appearance he should have such surgical attention as will make them appear as natural as possible. It is much easier for him if this is done while he is young. It saves him the embarrassment and handicap in being needlessly disfigured through the years in which he is most sensitive to criticism.

BLINDISMS

It is at this period in the child's life that blindisms develop. It may be due to his struggle to see, or it may be due to irritation still

existing that he acquires the habit of screwing the shut fists in the orbits, making useless motions with the face and head and limbs, rolling the head from side to side, snuffing the nose, twitching up one side of the face, these and numberless other disagreeable habits may at this time of the child's life be acquired, which later are exceedingly difficult to correct. Any habits that cause him to be less agreeable will make life harder for him.

The training of the voice to make it as musical and sympathetic as possible will be a great advantage to the child, and a quiet, self-possessed manner, instead of a nervous and jerky one will not only make him more agreeable, but will give him balance of mind as he has poise of manner.

In a word, before the child can be placed under the systematic and special training provided for the sightless much can be done by the intelligent mother, under the advice of the physician, to so aid the child's development as to make life easier and simpler when the systematic training of the school is commenced.

The time in which the blind child should be placed under the instruction of those specially qualified to train him in a school for the blind is the earliest period at which children are admitted, and that is kindergarten age. Very often mothers do great injustice to their children by failing to realize this important fact. A mother of a bright five-year-old child, who was advised to send her to a school for the blind, said, "Oh, but I couldn't you know, I am her mother." Not knowing that she was withholding from that child the one possible advantage that could in any way take the place of its lost sight.

DELAYED INSTRUCTION

It is not at all unusual to find that children thirteen and fourteen years old are reluctantly taken to schools for the blind, and find themselves handicapped by their utter inability to do the simple things that other blind children easily do, because of the mistaken kindness of parents or friends. They are unable to put on their own clothes, to button their shoes, or to use their hands and fingers in the simplest mechanical effort. The handicap which they suffer is so great that it can never be completely overcome.

While the child is still very young is the opportune time, therefore, for the physician to make these facts clear to the devoted, but

uninformed parents, and to help them to realize that the greatest kindness which they can show to their afflicted child is to give him the training which alone will enable him to compete in the activities of life with those who see.

SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND

In the kindergarten, as well as in all grades of a school for the blind, the same ends are sought as in the school for the seeing. In the literary work the curriculum is that of the grammar and of the high school. In the department of music the teaching is that of a thorough and complete school for music, including harmony and composition. Many of the blind, by reason of the concentration necessary, acquire the rare quality of absolute pitch, which is unusual among the best trained of those who see. Those who are gifted with musical ears, and are willing to do the necessary hard work, become exceedingly proficient upon the piano and organ. The hands of the pupils are strengthened and the muscles coordinated by manual training; while those having less intellectuality, but greater manual skill, are taught such industries as may be performed without sight. These are more varied than one would believe possible.

TOUCH AT A DISTANCE

The dependence of the blind upon the sense of touch develops in some instances to a very high degree that peculiar quality of recognizing the nearness of any material body by some unusual development of the external sensory nerves.

It is a very generally recognized fact that when one passes through an absolutely dark hallway into an equally dark but open space beyond there is a consciousness of a sense of freedom. Conversely, as one approaches a solid wall in the darkness or with the eyes shut, is a feeling of obstruction. It is difficult to say just what the feeling is that one experiences. It can be described only as a consciousness of the approaching nearness of an object having a reasonably large surface area. In the blind this is often developed to an extraordinarily high degree.

A most interesting study of this sense, which is called "Touch at a Distance," was the subject of a paper read at the International Congress for the Blind held in Naples in nineteen hundred and nine. It has also been considered

by the French Academy. Curiously enough, however, it has received comparatively little general recognition, and not very wide scientific study.

Among the more intelligent and quickwitted pupils at the State School for the Blind at Batavia this faculty is so highly developed that it is not at all uncommon for some of them to be able to know with considerable certainty while walking along the street when a house is being passed and when a vacant space. Very many of them can tell when the object is a tree, and some of them sufficiently discriminating to distinguish between a tree and a post; as the latter leaves an open space above the height of the head.

In order that we might determine how highly developed this sense was in the blind, experiments were made with many of the pupils in the State School. The tests were first made by placing some object in the gymnasium and the pupil was directed to locate it. This was very universally and easily done, until it was discovered that on one side of the gymnasium was a heating apparatus from which issued a slightly hissing sound of escaping steam. Whenever the test object came between the radiator and the boy who was being examined the sound was diminished, and it was soon evident that in this particular room the test object was located almost wholly by the sense of hearing.

In order to eliminate any such possibility a special target was made which could be suspended upon a standard, the width of the standard being about three inches and its height six feet. The target itself was composed of thin folding boards, which when opened to the fullest extent made a surface covering four square feet. When it was folded once it was two feet long and one foot wide. When folded again it was one foot square. This target was taken out upon the lawn on several occasions when there was almost no air stirring. The soft velvet surface of the grass made it impossible to detect any footfalls, or to have any appreciable amount of sound reflected from the target as was done within the walls of a closed room.

A small boy who had absolutely no light perception was taken out upon the lawn, and the target set up, and then from some point remote from it the boy was told to locate it. He moved carefully round as a pointer dog might, with his face bent forward, until he

suddenly seemed to recognize the presence of some obstruction in one particular direction. He gradually approached it, having been told to indicate immediately upon recognizing its presence the direction in which it stood from him. Again and again, when it was opened to its fullest extent, he located it exactly at a distance of fourteen feet. It was folded once and with almost equal certainty he recognized it at ten feet. The target was then taken from the standard and he located the narrow strip of wood of which the standard was constructed at a distance of three feet. Many other of the pupils were able to locate the standard, but none with the degree of accuracy, quickness, and at the distance of which this lad did.

The opinion has been suggested that it is in the hearing that this sense finds its center. There is every reason to believe that the ears enter largely into it, although it does not seem that it is solely in the sense of hearing that this faculty resides.

This same lad was taken in the large hall of the school and pledgets of cotton placed in his ears, and he seemed quite unable to locate the target similarly placed. However, blind people who have had the face covered with a veil are equally confounded when the tests are made. It is very probable that the pressure sense, excited by the slight compression of the air between the solid surface and the surface nerves, both of the face and of the tympanum, enter largely into this phenomenon.

It is our purpose to make a series of very exact scientific investigations, to be reported later, when the time can be afforded, to the consideration of this subject alone, as it is one which appeals not only to the ophthalmologist, but as well to the otologist, to the neurologist, the physiologist and the psychologist. It is merely touched upon in the limited time allowed for this paper as one of the intensely absorbing topics associated with the study of the blind.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE BLIND AND THEIR FRIENDS

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The following suggestions have been offered by men and women from different parts of the United States who have worked with and for the blind for many years.

Most of the suggestions have come from those who are themselves blind. Some may be of little value to you and with others you may not agree. One of those who offered some of the suggestions said, "It takes a wise head to know the when-ness and the where-ness of all these things."

Remember that there are two classes of blind adults; those to whom the loss of sight is the only handicap, and those in whom the cause which produced blindness has also produced other physical disabilities. Unfortunately there are many in the latter group, and this makes the problem of the newly-blinded adult very difficult. Blindness with a strong body and mind unimpaired is one thing; blindness plus shattered nerves, a weakened body and serious physical ailments is quite another matter.

The first step should be to eliminate the handicaps other than blindness and help the man or woman to be as nearly normal as possible. Inspire in him courage and confidence in himself. He must have confidence in himself before the world will have confidence in him. Encourage him, so far as it is practical, to follow the same pursuits he followed with sight, for this work he knows how to do. Compel him, if necessary, to exercise and show him how failing in this he simply adds to his physical disabilities, but do not fail to provide some way by which he may exercise. Remove if possible the feeling of loneliness and aloneness which comes with blindness and show him that he has friends and give him something to do, even though it be of little value in itself.

Inasmuch as a person's self-respect depends in considerable measure upon his ability for self-support, the blind should be helped to find or to prepare themselves for some remunerative employment.

"In dealing with a patient," writes an oculist of national reputation, "one should always tell the truth. It is neither necessary nor wise in every case to tell the whole truth *to the sufferer*. Pandora left her best gift in the box, when the others flew away;—*but it is imperative that the relatives or near friends should know the exact facts*. Lack of frankness causes loss of confidence, and in desperation the poor man who feels the night settling about him flies from one to another in the vain hope of finding a way of escape. If the reputable and dependable oculist fails to enlighten him as to his future he siezes upon the unwarrantable encouragement offered by the unscrupulous and ignorant quack, immensely increasing his disappointment and unhappiness when the inevitable blindness comes. He should have a reasonable time to prepare himself to meet the new conditions under which he must live, and then, more than ever in his life he needs the encouragement and support of those who can make him realize that all is not necessarily lost,—because he must use other means than those to which he has been accustomed to bring him in touch with the world.

"Usually the man for whom blindness is imminent knows nothing of the blind, their possibilities, or their achievements. He very naturally thinks that when his eyes are shut all avenues are closed. Let those who know what can be done without sight, be his good angels during this period of discouragement and dismay. Let them bring to his knowledge the biographies of successful blind men and women, not alone those who were eminent and gifted like Milton or Fawcett, or Senator Gore, but those like himself if he is of ordinary ability and intelligence, who have fought their way cheerfully through life, in the dark, and have achieved contentment at least, if not happiness, which is the gift of the gods reserved for few. Let him be buoyed up over the danger period and he will have the courage to face life under the new conditions and not weakly to throw it away like a child terrified by present limitations, as Dick did in the 'Light that Failed.'"

SECTION I

SUGGESTIONS TO THOSE WHO SEE

1. Treat the blind, as far as possible, as if they could see. At least, with as much courtesy as you would a sighted person.

2. Don't remind them that they are blind.

3. Don't shout at them. The loss of sight does not necessarily mean the loss of hearing.

4. Don't discuss blind peoples' infirmities before them. (Apply the Golden Rule.)

5. Omit the topic of blindness from your conversation with the blind. Do not enumerate the feats of wonderful blind individuals

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whom you may have known when talking with a blind person.

6. Blindness does not affect the mental faculties, although *the disease* which causes blindness often affects the mental and physical capabilities. The adult blind, especially, should be shown which limitations are due to blindness and which to the diseases causing blindness.

7. Don't kill the blind with kindness. (Mistaken kindness often does more harm than good.) *Help the blind to help themselves.*

8. Don't wait on the blind too much. Sometimes blind adults are clothed as if they were children by their relatives.

Example: One able-bodied man was still in bed waiting for his mother to come and clothe him when a visitor called.

9. Teach blind adults to make their own toilet.

10. Men who smoke should be shown how to keep the ashes off their clothes.

11. Let the blind person do as much as possible about the house.

Example: Mothers sometimes object to a daughter or a daughter objects to a mother helping when washing the dishes for fear that something will be broken. It is probable that fewer dishes are broken by blind housekeepers than by those who see.

12. Assign some special duty about the house for the blind to perform and then rely on them to do it.

13. Doors, gates, etc., should be left open or shut, *never half open*. Never leave buckets, brooms or other articles in halls, on stairs or in pathways.

14. If the blind person does not do a thing correctly, take the time to correct the mistake. You do not save time by saying, "Oh, it is quicker for me to do it myself." If you show the blind person how to do a thing, even though it takes some attention at first, the future will repay your efforts.

15. Be frank with the blind. They have to depend for certain things upon the sight of those with whom they live. Be as truthful as a mirror—it is the kindest way in the long run.

16. Don't ignore the presence of a blind person.

17. Be as courteous to a blind person as to one who sees. When introducing people, introduce the blind person in accordance with social requirements.

18. Do not grasp a blind person's hand and expect him immediately to mention your name. His thoughts may be far away and you demand of him instantly to make up his mind who you are, while you have the opportunity of looking at the persons you are about to meet long before you greet them. In speaking to a blind person in the presence of others always address him by name, so there may be no mistake as to whom you are speaking.

19. Upon meeting a blind person, address him at once; you should take the initiative in salutations. The facial expression to the sighted tells what the voice alone reveals to the blind.

20. Teach a blind person how to meet people.

Example: Give a blind man a signal so that he can take his hat off at the proper time.

21. Encourage them to go to the front door to receive callers.

Example: Some home teachers insist that their pupils shall always admit them to their home so that the pupil may have practice in doing this acceptably. Sometimes this is not practical and should not be insisted upon.

22. Consult the blind person directly. Do not ask some other person for information that can be given immediately and more correctly by the sightless individual.

Example: Do not talk over the blind person's head with a neighbor who can see with regard to whether he will have salt or sugar upon his food.

At the dining table do not assume that the blind person knows what is to be served and say, "What will you have?" but ask definitely, "Will you have some beef, some apple pie?" etc.

23. When assisting a blind person at the table do so quietly without calling attention to the assistance that you are giving.

24. When a room is filled with guests, and a blind person is escorted to the piano, do not slip into his seat while he is gone. Or, if you do, be sure that he is shown to another seat so that he will not have to choose between remaining on the piano stool or the embarrassing possibility of seating himself in someone's lap.

25. When writing at dictation for or reading to a blind person, don't offer suggestions unless asked for them. For the time being you are

nothing more than a pen, pencil or reader—act your part well.

26. When walking with a blind person, as a general rule, let the blind person take *your* arm. Don't push him ahead of you. Think how uncomfortable you would be if, with your eyes blindfolded, you were pushed over unknown ground. The confidence you might have had in your guide at first is rudely jarred with a stunning introduction to a lamp post, a tree, a letter box, a water plug or a sudden step down. Such accidents will occur much less frequently when the sighted person goes slightly ahead. After becoming thoroughly acquainted with a guide, the blind person can walk side by side with the one who sees. When an obstacle is approached, however, if the guide will go a little in advance it will not be necessary for a lot of verbal warnings such as, "Step up, here's a tree, four steps down, etc."

27. When walking with a blind person be eyes for him, not only in directing his footsteps, but in speaking of things that you see and which are of interest to you.

28. When boarding a street car the most important thing for the blind person is to find quickly and inconspicuously the vertical hand rail at the side of the car. The easiest way to manage this is for the guide to enter first. When you place your hand upon the rail do not leave go of it until the blind person has passed his hand up your arm to the rail. In this way the exact location of the rail can be ascertained quickly and without making the blind person conspicuous.

Some blind people prefer to go into cars first, but experience shows that it is usually easier to let the sighted guide precede.

29. Encourage blind men to carry a light walking stick. Not for tapping on the sidewalk, but rather as an extended hand to give him immediate warnings of things unseen. Some blind men find it advantageous to carry the stick in the right hand with the tip slightly in advance of the left foot. This brings it diagonally across the legs and saves sudden contact with baby carriages, etc., which may have been left on the sidewalk.

30. Blind people who enjoy going to church are often denied this privilege through the thoughtlessness of their friends. If you do not attend church yourself some of your friends

do and would be glad to accompany the blind person if given the opportunity.

31. The blind enjoy being read to, a good concert and a first-class play. Chess, checkers, dominoes, cards, etc., are possible and much enjoyed by those who have procured the devices that are made for the use of the blind when playing with those who see. The sighted person who accompanies a blind friend to a theatrical performance can help materially by telling him when the various actors enter; particularly when the entrance is supposed to be concealed from the other actors on the stage. It is also helpful to describe the scenery, give a rapid word picture of the arrangement of the stage and describe the action when the actors are not talking.

32. If, when sighted, he was fond of reading, encourage efforts to learn an embossed type to be read with the fingers; also the use of a typewriter which will enable him to do his own writing, whether correspondence or otherwise. A sighted person can teach a blind person without difficulty. (See suggestions in Section III.)

SECTION II

SUGGESTIONS TO THE BLIND

1. Do everything each day as nearly as you used to do previous to the loss of sight.

2. You cannot be too particular about your personal appearance. If you know that your eyes are disfigured, wear ground or smoked glasses. Avoid mannerisms. Cultivate a fine bodily poise, this depends upon an erect carriage, which results from keeping the shoulders back and chin up. A little care along these lines will bring a gratifying reward in the hearty approbation of your friends.

3. When a person offers to assist you accept the assistance graciously and with a smile. If you must decline, do so courteously and in a way that will not make that person hesitate to offer aid to you or to someone else at some time when assistance is needed. It may be embarrassing to you sometimes to have assistance offered; it is just as embarrassing to have it refused. You cannot afford to meet kindness discourteously. On the other hand do not allow people to wait on you inch by inch but wait on yourself when you can.

To summarize 2 and 3, be neat in your

personal appearance, courteous in demeanor, and just as unselfish as possible.

4. Take every opportunity to mingle with seeing people, socially as well as in business. Cultivate their acquaintanceship and friendship. Take an active part in social, religious, political and fraternal organizations.

5. When in society take part in conversation unobtrusively, but in such a manner to make your personality agreeably felt.

6. Always look at the person with whom you may be conversing.

7. Get into direct and frequent communication with those who have lost their sight and adjusted themselves to the changed conditions. If possible do this before sight is wholly gone. Association with successful well-poised blind people will do much to minimize the handicap of blindness.

8. You must of necessity depend upon seeing people for many things, no matter how capable you are and how successful you have become, but because you must have such assistance do not allow the habit to grow upon you to make unreasonable and burdensome demands upon those who are near and dear to you.

9. Remember that whenever you undertake to do a thing and you make a mistake usually it will be attributed to your blindness. This is unjust but nevertheless a fact. The only way it can be averted is to do everything with the utmost care. Carelessness which is unnoticed in the sighted becomes conspicuous in the blind.

10. In conclusion, we give the following quotation from a blind man who has a message for all:

"It takes more brains, as they say, for a blind person to succeed—but we are given them freely if we can use them and be patient. Blindness has long since ceased to be an affliction to me—rather it has become an open door of opportunity to deeper thought, to realms of fairer things. I would rather be an inspiration to those who need it than live upon the cheap pity and forced sympathy of those who are bearing not only their own burdens but the burdens that do not belong to them. I try

to be a help in rousing some sleepy soul to new life by my own example."

SECTION III IN GENERAL

1. Don't exalt or condemn the blind as a whole because you are acquainted with some particular blind individual. Give every blind person an opportunity to prove his ability. Those who are acquainted with the blind who have had the advantages of an early training in a school are apt to expect too much of adults who lost their sight after school age.

2. For help in securing materials for home instruction in reading, devices for amusements (cards, dominoes, etc.), the addresses of successful blind men and women in your locality, who can give useful advice and by their example inspiration, apply to your State School, State Commission or Society for the Blind.

3. Books for the blind, printed in raised characters, can be secured from many libraries and are sent through the mails without postage.

The *Matilda Ziegler Magazine*, printed in New York Point and American Braille, will be sent free of expense, to any blind person in America, upon application to the editor, Walter G. Holmes, 250 West 54th St., New York City, N. Y.

The *OUTLOOK FOR THE BLIND*, a quarterly record of the progress and welfare of the sightless (published in ink print), gives constant information about work for the blind. Price, \$1.00 a year to the sighted and 50 cents to the blind. Sample copies will be sent free upon application to the editor, Charles F. F. Campbell, Columbus, Ohio.

(Suggestions for the care and education of blind children will be furnished upon application to your State School for the Blind.)

A pamphlet giving the address, purpose, requirements for admission, name of superintendent, and a brief sketch of the work of every institution and organization for the blind in America has been compiled and can be obtained by applying to the *OUTLOOK FOR THE BLIND*, Columbus, Ohio.

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